

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 5896

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PE
SUBJ: APRA AND THE LEFT: A DEAL IN THE WIND?

REF: LIMA 5509, LIMA 5813

SUMMARY. POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN PERU IS FOCUSING ON POSSIBLE ALLIANCES OR UNDERSTANDINGS TO FORM A WORKING MAJORITY IN THE FORTHCOMING ASSEMBLY. APRA IS THE KEY WITH THE SINGLE LARGEST BLOC OF SEATS AND ITS POSITION BETWEEN THE RIGHT AND LEFT. A DEAL WITH THE RIGHTIST PPC IS FACING PROBLEMS. BOTH APRA AND THE LARGEST PARTY ON THE LEFT, FOCEP, ARE MAKING CONCILIATORY NOISES, BUT THE PROBLEM OF MILITARY OPPOSITION TO FOCEP MUST BE CONSIDERED. MUCH OF CURRENT TALK MAY REPRESENT PARTISAN JOCKEYING BUT APRA MAY HAVE TO MAKE A DECISION BY THE TIME THE ASSEMBLY OPENS JULY 28 WHEN HAYA'S ELECTION TO THE PRESIDENCY OR OTHER ISSUES MUST BE FACED. END SUMMARY.

1. ALTHOUGH THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE JUNE 18 CONSTITUENT ELECTIONS HAVE NOT BEEN RELEASED, IT IS APPARENT THAT NO PARTY WILL HAVE A SIMPLE MAJORITY. AS A RESULT, TALK IN POLITICAL CIRCLES IN PERU NOW CENTERS ON PROSPECTS FOR COALITIONS, ALLIANCES OR UNDERSTANDINGS AS THE THREE MAJOR GROUPS - CENTER, RIGHT AND LEFT, EXPLORE THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF VARIOUS COMBINATIONS. CENTRAL TO THIS EXERCISE IS THE APRA, REPRESENTING NOT ONLY
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THE LARGEST NUMBER OF SEATS (AT LEAST 36 OR 37) BUT ALSO THE MODERATE BALANCING FORCE BETWEEN THE MAJORITY OF THE LEFT (FOCEP) AND THE RIGHT (BEDOYA'S PPC).

2. APRA HAS FOUR OPTIONS TO EXPLORE IN ITS EFFORT TO ASSURE ITS DOMINANCE OF THE ASSEMBLY;

-- A DEAL WITH THE PPC;

-- ALLIANCE WITH THE SMALLER PARTIES (MDP, UNO, FNTC) PLUS SOME VOTES STOLEN FROM PPC'S ALLEGEDLY INDISCIPLINED BLOC;

-- A "SHIFTING ALLIANCE" STRATEGY, SIDING WITH THE LEFT OR RIGHT ON INDIVIDUAL ISSUES AS SUGGESTED TO US BY APRA LEADER TOWNSEND (LIMA 5509);

-- AND FINALLY, AN ARRANGEMENT WITH FOCEP AND ITS ERSTWHILE ALLY, UDP.

3. THE MOST OBVIOUS ALLIANCE OF THE DEMOCRATIC FORCES - APRA AND PPC - FACES SOME SERIOUS PROBLEMS, NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH IS HAYA DE LA TORRE'S RECENT ASSERTION THAT SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WOULD BE "UNNATURAL". (BUT, OF COURSE, SO WERE APRA'S EARLIER ALLIANCES WITH RIGHTISTS SUCH AS ODRIA AND PRADO). AND, THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT APRA LEADERS ARE FINDING A STRONG UNDERCURRENT OF OPPOSITION WITHIN PARTY RANKS TO AN ASSOCIATION WITH THE RIGHT, ESPECIALLY FROM YOUTH, AND PERHAPS SOME SUPPORT FOR ARMANDO VILLANUEVA'S THESIS THAT THE PARTY SHOULD GET BACK TO ITS BASIC SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PHILOSOPHY. OPPOSITION TO A DEAL WITH THE PPC MAY ALSO BE A PRODUCT OF BEDOYA'S EXCESSES IN HIS CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE REFORMS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT WHICH SOME OBSERVERS CHARACTERIZE AS AN ELECTORAL TACTIC THAT BACKFIRED. (BEDOYA MAY HAVE RECOGNIZED HIS ERROR WHEN HE BEGAN TO QUALIFY HIS POSITIONS

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ON AGRARIAN REFORM, ETC. TOWARD THE END OF HIS CAMPAIGN). BEDOYA'S REMARK THAT TO SERVE AS PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY WOULD BE A "WASTE OF TIME", ALONG WITH OTHER LONG-STANDING "AFFRONTES", ALSO MITIGATE AGAINST AN APRA-PPC ALLIANCE.

4. AN APRA-FOCEP ACCORD AT FIRST BLUSH APPEARS UNLIKELY, A MARRIAGE BETWEEN THE NEW "ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT" FORCES OF THE EXTREME LEFT AND THE OLD-LINE ANTI-COMMUNIST APRA. HOWEVER, GIVEN SOME DOCTRINAL SIMILARITIES, (TROTSKYITE OPPOSITION TO STALINIST COMMUNISM) PLUS THE FACT THAT MANY FOCEP AND UDP LEADERS (LEDESMA, NAPURI, SCORZA) WERE IN THE PAST APRA SYMPATHIZERS OR MILITANTS, IT IS NOT TO BE ENTIRELY RULED OUT.

4. INDEED, IT IS APPARENT THAT NEITHER APRA NOR FOCEP HAS DISMISSED THIS POSSIBILITY. VILLANUEVA WAS QUICK TO EXTEND EXILED FOCEP LEADER LEDESMA HIS CONGRATULATIONS ON THE FRONT'S SURPRISING SHOWING. LEDESMA, IN A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW FROM PARIS PUBLISHED IN "X" REPAID THE COMPLIMENT IN REFERRING TO VILLANUEVA AS "MY GOOD FRIEND AND (FORMER) PARLIAMENTARY COLLEAGUE". MORE IMPORTANTLY, LEDESMA, WHILE APPARENTLY REJECTING AN APRA-FOCEP ALLIANCE, ASSERTED THAT THERE ARE COINCIDENCES OF INTERESTS BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS AND SAID FOCEP MUST BE "FLEXIBLE" IN ITS

DEALINGS WITHIN THE ASSEMBLY.

6. IF FOCEP AND THE UDP GET TOGETHER (WHICH APPEARS LIKELY) AND IF FOCEP CAN KEEP ITS DISPARATE MEMBERSHIP IN LINE (A MAJOR TASK), CURRENT ARITHMETIC WOULD GIVE AN APRA-FOCEP-UDP GROUPING PERHAPS A SIMPLE MAJORITY OF 51. HOWEVER, THERE ARE MAJOR RISKS TO THIS APPROACH IF INDEED IT IS BEING CONSIDERED SERIOUSLY IN APRA'S INNER CIRCLES, THE MAJOR ONE BEING THE REACTION OF THE PERUVIAN MILITARY. HISTORY HAS CHANGED SIGNIFICANTLY THE APRA-MILITARY RELATIONSHIP (LIMA 5813), GIVING THE PARTY ITS BEST CHANCE FOR POWER IN ITS 50 YEARS OF ELECTIONEERING. BUT FOCEP (ALONG WITH THE PSR) IS ANATHEMA TO THE ARMED FORCES AND A MOVE BY APRA THAT APPEARED TO COMPROMISE IT WITH THE EXTREME, ANTI-MILITARY LEFT, COULD REKINDLE OLD SUSPICIONS ABOUT
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APRA'S TRUE COLORS. CONSIDERATION OF THIS FACTOR COULD WEIGH IN FAVOR OF THE TOWNSEND "SHIFTING ALLIANCE" APPROACH.

7. AT THIS STAGE, IT IS TOO EARLY TO TELL WHICH OPTION APRA WILL CHOOSE AND MUCH OF WHAT WE ARE SEEING PROBABLY REPRESENTS PARTISAN POSTURING TO WIN APRA THE BEST TERMS FOR ANY UNDERSTANDING IT MAY EVENTUALLY CONCLUDE. NONETHELESS, THE PARTY MUST SOON MAKE A DECISION. THE JNE HAS CALLED FOR THE OPENING OF THE ASSEMBLY'S PREPARATORY COMMISSION JULY 17. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT HAYA DE LA TORRE, WITH THE LARGEST SINGLE PREFERENTIAL VOTE, WILL CHAIR THAT COMMISSION. AS TO THE ASSEMBLY ITSELF, HOWEVER IT MUST FACE ON JULY 28TH THE QUESTION OF HAYA'S PRESIDENCY AS WELL AS OTHER BASIC ISSUES FOR WHICH A 51 VOTE MAJORITY WILL BE REQUIRED. SHLAUDEMAN

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